

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

OMB-01 DRC-01 L-03 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 /063 W

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R 180751Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1685

INFO NAVELELEXSYSCOM FOR PME-119

CNO WASHDC

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CINCPACREP CANBERRA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, AS, US

SUBJ: FUNDING OF PROJECT OMEGA IN AUSTRALIA

REF: STATE 075343

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FORMER MINISTER PEACOCK ASKED DFA REP. DURING JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR LATEST INFORMATION REGARDING USG ABILITY TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF OMEGA STATION HERE. PEACOCK NOTED USG HAD INFORMED GOA IN EARLY MAY THAT PREVIOUS USG FUNDING ON WHICH NEGOTIATIONS OF PAST TWO YEARS HAVE BEEN BASED, WOULD NOT BE VALID BEYOND JUNE 30, 1973. HE NOTED MATTER OF U.S. FUNDING WAS VERY GERMANE TO COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION OF PROJECT AND IMPLIED THAT IF USG FUNDING IS NO LONGER COMPARABLE TO THAT OFFERED IN PAST, COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION OF SUBJECT MIGHT BE IN VAIN. END SUMMARY. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH CURRENT STATEMENT ON PROSPECTS FOR U.S. FUNDING OF AUSTRALIAN OMEGA STATEION WHICH CAN BE PASSED TO DFA FOR USE BY JOINT COMMITTEE.

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2. DURING COURSE OF DFA PRESENTATIONON OMEGA BEFORE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON SEPT. 18, DFA REP

FLOOD WAS ASKED BY LIBERAL MP FROM VICTORIA ANDREW PEACOCK FOR MOST RECENT INFORMATION ON FUNDING OF OMEGA STATION IN AUSTRALIA. PEACOCK NOTED THAT DFA PRESENTATION STATED THAT USG AUTHORITIES HAD INFORMED GOA IN LETTER OF MAY 2, 1973 (BASED ON PARAS 2 THROUGH 5 REFTEL) THAT PREVIOUS U.S. FUNDING WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE AFTER JUNE 30, 1973. PEACOCK ASKED FOR MOST RECENT INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO U.S. POSITION ON FUNDING IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS INFORMATION PART OF COMMITTEE RECORD. FLOOD INDICATED HE WOULD REQUEST INFORMATION AND PROVIDE TO COMMITTEE.

3. CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE, SENATOR JOHN WHEELDON OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, SUPPORTED PEACOCK'S REQUEST FOR THIS INFORMATION AND STATED COMMITTEE FELT SOME "URGENCY" IN OBTAINING THIS INFORMATION WHICH WAS VERY GERMANE TO COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION OF SUBJECT.

4. EMBASSY APPRECIATES IT PROBABLY NOT POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE COMMITTEE WITH SPECIFIC ANSWER AS TO AMOUNT OF MONEY USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR STATION IN AUSTRALIA. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE MATTER FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOA, SINCE WE HAVE INFORMED THEM THAT PREVIOUS AUTHORIZATION FOR EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTING OMEGA STATION IN AUSTRALIA HAS NOW EXPIRED. IT WOULD BE USEFUL, HOWEVER, TO REITERATE AT THIS STATE USG WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ABOUT 2 MILLION DOLLARS' WORTH OF TRANSMITTING EQUIPMENT, AS WITH OTHER STATIONS IN SYSTEM, AND ANY INDICATION AS TO LIKELIHOOD OF FUNDS BEING MADE AVAILABLE IN FUTURE, E.G. ALTERNATIVES A AND B IN PARA 4 REFTEL.

5. CONTEXT OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION STATED ABOVE WAS GENERAL DISCUSSION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WHICH AUSTRALIA MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF OMEGA STATION HERE. COMMENTS RANGED FROM "WHY ARE WE (AUSTRALIA) SO MEAN" (REPRESENTATIVE HAMER FROM VICTORIA, LIBERAL PARTY) TO QUESTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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ABOUT WHY USG IS BEING SO GENEROUS IN PROVIDING FUNDS FOR EQUIPMENT OF STATION (REPRESENTATIVE DUTHIE FROM VICTORIA, LABOR PARTY). PEACOCK, WHO WAS MINISTER UNDER PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, ASKED QUESTION TO DETERMINE IF COMMITTEE HAD GROUNDS FOR ASSUMING CONTINUED U.S. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR OMEGA AND IMPLIED THAT COMMITTEE'S WORK WOULD BE IN VAIN IF PREVIOUS USG COMMITMENT REGARDING FINANCING WAS NO LONGER VALID.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE CURRENT READING OF

FINANCIAL SITUATION WITH REGARD TO AUSTRALIAN OMEGA STATION. SUCH INFORMATION WOULD BE PASSED TO DFA FOR PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE AND WOULD THEREFORE BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE WITHIN A SHORT TIME. IT IS IMPORTANT AT THIS STAGE TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE IN REGARD TO FINANCING, ALTHOUGH AUSTRALIANS CERTAINLY WILL UNDERSTAND IF USG CANNOT MAKE FIRM COMMITMENT. IT APPARENT THAT SEVERAL LABOR MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE ARE MUCH CONCERNED WITH FINANCIAL COSTS TO AUSTRALIA OF PROPOSED STATION AND WOULD SEIZE UPON ANY APPARENT U.S. RELUCTANCE TO PROVIDE FUNDING COMPARABLE TO THAT OFFERED BEFORE AS REASON FOR TURNING DOWN STATION IN AUSTRALIA. SINCE WE CANNOT BE SPECIFIC, WE SHOULD COUCH OUR REPLY IN AS FAVORABLE LIGHT AS POSSIBLE ON ASSUMPTION THAT AUSTRALIAN STATION IS IMPORTANT TO COMPLETION OF OMEGA NETWORK.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** n/a  
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